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A DISPUTATION CONCERNING Church--Members AND THEIR CHILDREN, IN ANSWER TO XXI. QUESTIONS:

Wherein the State of such *Children* when *Adult*, Together with their Duty towards the Church, And the Churches Duty towards them is DISCUSSED.

BY AN

ASSEMBLY of DIVINES

meeting at BOSTON in

NEW ENGLAND,

June 4th. 1657.

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June 17

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the READER.

IT *is justly accounted one of the glories of the* English Nation, *that God hath honoured them with special light in some momentous Truths, above what he hath other* Protestant Churches *round about them. The morality of the Christian Sabbath, deep and spiritual insight into those secret transactions between the Lord and the soules of his elect at their first conversion, & also in their after walking in communion with God, are usually observed as instances hereof. And of the same kind, though perhaps in a lower rank, are those Truths about the* instituted Worship *of God, which have been now for some years a considerable part of those disquisitions, which do also at this day exercise the most searching thoughts and ablest pens that are amongst us. And truly the dealing of God in his Providence towards the people of* this Land, *in bringing out the light and glory of these Truths, hath been observable, and different from the way that he hath walked in to* other Churches. *For, whereas they rose up from* Antichristian apostasie *in Doctrine and Discipline both at once, together with his abominations in Faith, rejecting also his inventions in* Church Order, *insomuch as neither the Head,* the Pope, *nor his Body in the principal Members of it,* the Arch-Bishops *and* Bishops *with the rest of that* Hierarchical frame, *have at all been to be found exercising the usurpations of the* man of sin, *in most of the* Reformed Protestant Churches *since the first day of their rejecting* Popery: *In* England *it was far otherwise, the head of* Antichrist *being indeed here cut off by* Henry *the* eighth, *who justled him from his usurped supremacy within his Territories, but yet (as is observed of him) he left his body,* the Hierarchy, *continuing; which for many years not only stood, but exercised in a great measure, the authority of the* Dragon, *and made an image of the* Beast, *and caused as many as would not worship it to be killed. And in this the Lord had doubtlesse a design, more fully to lay open the loathsomnesse of the abominations of the* mystery

ſtery of iniquity *in this part of it; which by his infinite wiſdom is* effectually *carried on all along, and hath in a good part accompliſhed in theſe daies wherein we live. For even from the firſt* Reformation *here begun, the Lord ſhone in upon the underſtandings of ſome of his precious ſervants, with ſuch an evidence of light in theſe things, as overpowred their Conſciences, and conſtrained them to bear a publick teſtimony againſt the* remainders *of* Antichriſt *in the Land. Inſomuch as from that time, till the day of the downfal of all the* Hierarchical brood, *God never ſuffered himſelf to be without his witneſſes in this cauſe of his, whom he raiſed up, and whoſe right hand he held, to plead, and preach, and pray, and weep, and beleeve, and print, and contend, and reſiſt, and ſuffer, for the inſtitutions of Chriſt, not only to ſilencing and reproach, but to baniſhment and blood it ſelf ſome of them. And verily the number of the* Martyrs *of Jeſus Chriſt, who have had his teſtimony and kept the Word of the patience of the Saints in this Land ſince the firſt Reformation, will be found not to be few, and their ſufferings neither few nor light, whenever that dying wiſh of judicious and bleſſed* Ames *ſhall be accompliſhed as it deſerves,* viz. *that a* Martyrologie, *in this cauſe of* Church-Diſcipline *under the* Biſhops, *ſhould be compiled and publiſhed to the world. And hence it is come to paſſe, that amongſt the* Engliſh *Divines and Chriſtians there is, as was ſaid, more light in theſe points, and in ſundry of their Church Aſſemblies and adminiſtrations more purity, then is ſo ordinarily to be met withal in others. Amongſt all that have ſuffered for and ſearched into theſe Truths, they of* New-England *juſtly deſerve, and will have, a name and a glory, as long as the earth ſhall have any remembrance of an* Engliſh Nation; *not only for their ſufferings here under the iniquity of thoſe bloody Fathers of the Church (as they loved to be ſtiled) the* Biſhops, *though they bore as great if not a greater ſhare therein than moſt of their brethren that ſtaied behind them. But more eſpecially will after ages honour them, for that great and high adventure of theirs, in tranſporting themſelves, their wives, and little ones, upon the rude waves of the vaſt Ocean, into a remote, deſolate and howling wilderneſſe, and there encountring by Faith and patience, with a world of temptations, and ſtreights, and preſſing wants, and difficulties; and this, upon no other inducements, but that they might meet with him whom their ſouls loved in the midſt of his Golden Candleſticks, and*

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see him as they have there seen him in his Sanctuary: An undertaking hardly to be parallell'd, unlesse perhaps by that of their Father Abraham *from* Ur *of the* Caldees, *or that of his seed from the Land of* Egypt.

And these are the men, Christian Reader, who are the Authors of this disputation now put into thy hands; which deserves esteem and acceptance somwhat the rather on this account, because it comes from such as it doth, and is about such a Subject; even from men holy and learned, and is about that which they have searched into, as seriously, impartially and unprejudicedly, as any men are ever like to do in this world. Besides, that being themselves Officers to Instituted Churches *of Saints, and this work of theirs being nexily and especially for the service of the Churches, they did therein lie under as direct and full an influence of the Spirit of Christ, and were on all accounts as compleatly wrapt within the promise for their guidance, as men can on this side Heaven. Yea 'tis about those Truths which they have, and at this day do suffer for; and therefore they are as likely as most others, to be the instruments in the hand of Christ, by whom he will communicate further light in these points: God is never behind hand with men, and as some special exercise of any particular Grace strengthens and encreaseth it, and establisheth the heart in it and with it; so, the obedience and faithfulnesse of his servants to any truth of Christ, especially if in an eminent degree and manner, engageth God to make known more of his counsel and will in that truth to such persons, and as under such an engagement the Lord looks upon himself. It is true indeed the* Civil Magistrates *of that* Jurisdiction *of the* English *in* New-England *that lies upon the River* Connecticuot, *sent these Questions to the* Magistrates *of the* Massachusets, *and they mutually called together sundry of the ablest* Ministers *of each* Colony, *and recommended to their search and considerations these enquiries thus stated, thus framed: And this was the happy rise of this* Disputation; *what is here thus tendered to the world, being the result and product of the consultations and debates on this occasion had, which was by the Elders met together agreed to, and accordingly presented, to the* Magistrates *of the aforesaid* Jurisdictions *respectively. But nevertheless, it was especially and nexily for the service of the* Churches, *the pious and careful* Magistrates *being herein indeed nursing Fathers to them; for they finding doubts, and*

perhaps some differences about these points, likely to arise and disquiet the Churches, took this prudent and happy course, timely to bring forth such light, as might be to universal satisfaction, before darkenesse had brought forth difference in judgment and perhaps practise also, and that contentions, and they such animosities and paroxysmes as would afterwards more hardly be healed, than prevented.

These Papers came some moneths ago to England, and it was then in his thoughts that had them in his hands, to have made them publick; but for some reasons which then prevailed with him he forbore, yet hath since given way thereto, partly expecting, according to some intimation which he had from New-England, that the Magistrates there would have ordered the printing of them. But, not hearing since that it is there done, he hath given way to the desires of some Friends here, who were acquainted with them, and with his having of them, that they should now thus be made publick; hoping withall, that what is done herein, will not be unacceptable to those Reverend persons, that were the authors of this Disputation. Especially considering, that God who formes the Spirit of man within him, and in an especial manner guides the hearts and studies of his servants, hath of late set awork some of them in Old England also, to search into these Questions, and communicate the issue of their enquiries to the world in print; whence likewise many more, are awakened to desire and long, for further light in these points about which the main part of this disputation is. Thus we see, the same great and blessed Spirit, that dwells and works in the hearts of all the Saints all the world over, hath, in this also, wrought the same work, on the hearts of the servants of Christ in Old England and in New: From whence there ariseth (though not such as quite to take away all difference in judgment, yet) a further oneneſſe and agreement between them, than that of blood and language, as men of the same Nation; or that of the common Faith, as fellow-Saints and servants of the same Lord. Like as two needles of equall weight, toucht at once with the loadstone, will as they say, by a secret Sympathy move alike and at once, though at many miles distance one from another; so the hearts of the Saints in both Englands, as being toucht with the same Spirit, have moved together towards the same enquiries; although perhaps, as in other points, they got the start of most of us here in England, being in the light, and shaking of the dust of Babilon, before most of our Churches did;

did; so they may in this also, have had the same honour; there appearing in them a study of the Questions resolved in this Disputation, before there was any observeable discovery of such a search here amongst us; the wise God keeping towards us both the like proportion still, so carrying on them and us, in an even pace, towards the same end of light and glory, which he will bring us both unto at last. And these Papers with the truths therein, having in themselves a tendency to this happy end, the midwifeing of them by the press into the publick and common light, in compliance with the aforesaid providence (they being likely otherwise to have lien hid in a private hand or two) cannot be look't upon as at all injurious to those honoured and reverend Elders that were the Authors of them, much lesse to any others; for 'tis here done, (saving the Errata of the press) with such faithfulnesse as cannot be impeached.

And this is the rather said, because perhaps the Reader may have been deceived in some other Treatises, which have gone abroad, and generally been look't upon, as the compilement of the Elders in New-England; whereas they had but one private person for their Author. So it is indeed in the 32 Questions, the Answerer whereof was Mr. Richard Mather, and not any other Elder or Elders in New-England, who likewise is the Author of the discourse concerning Church-Covenant printed therewith, which latter he wrote for his private use in his own Study, never intending, nor indeed consenting to its publication, nor so much as knowing unto this day how the copy of it came abroad into those hands by whom it is made publick, save that he conjectures some procured a copy of it from Mr. Cotton, to whom (such was their intimacy in his life time) he communicated it, as he writes in a late Letter to a Son of his now in England who it seems had enquired of him concerning those Treatises; and much lesse is there any truth in that which is said in the Title page prefixed to the Discourse of Church-Covenant, as if it were sent over to Mr. Barnard Anno 1639; Mr. Mather having neither acquaintance nor any intercourse by Letters with Mr. Barnard.

Nor indeed, are these Papers, now in thy hands, the declared judgment of all the Elders in New-England, there being but about twenty called together by the Magistrates to consult of these things, and declare their judgments in them, and of those twenty, two or three met not with the rest. They are nevertheless the genuine product of that

Meeting

Meeting of Elders *which on the forementioned occasion was held in the* 4th Moneth 1657 *at* Boston *in* New-England.

What entertainment they will meet with now they are abroad it is not for me to say. They must now run the same hazard with other writings of this kind. Some passages there are which I fear will be wrested by one kind of men or other to serve their own hypothesis. It was in my thoughts, having some special advantages for it, here to have inserted something as to those particulars for the prevention of such an abuse. But I shall only say this, let but such passages in this short tract as seem most to vary from what the Elders *and* Churches *of* New-England *have been accounted to professe and practise, receive an interpretation as they will bear, from their own declared judgment, either in their* platform of Church Discipline, *or in other writings of their own, and I doubt not but it will be found, they are not warped from their former Faith and Order: Whatever some may think from this Treatise, or whatever* Mr. Giles Firmin *hath born the world in hand, in any of his late misrepresentations of them; whom I rather chuse to instance in, for that his reports of* New England *have perhaps therefore found the more credit, because he above others is not without advantages to know* New-England, *and the waies of the Churches there, better than it seems he doth.*

The design of these enquiries *being to search out what course the* Lord Christ *in his wisdom and faithfulnesse hath appointed, for prevention of the degenerating of Churches in successive generations, from their primitive soundnesse and purity, and of the polluting and prostituting of his holy things thereby; it is not altogether improbable, but some additional contribution of light, may be brought forth by them to us here in* England, *in that great case of ours, about the restoring of such of our* Parishes *as retain any thing of the essence of a Church in them (and thence are capable of a reformation) to such a measure of purity, as may take off the just distasts and dissatisfactions of such, as are conscientiously tender of their Church-Communion: The preservation of Churches pure, & restauration of them when collapsed, meeting in the end, do also run along together in the way thereto, and are to be accomplished by the same rules. May this in any measure be the fruit of this* Disputations coming *under the presse, it will never repent any of those persons that have had any hand therein; yea it will be their rejoycing and their glory in the day of the Lord Jesus; and, that so it may, the blessing of Heaven be upon it.*

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DISPUTATION

CONCERNING

Church--Members

AND THEIR

CHILDREN

IN

ANSWER TO 21 QUESTIONS.

Queſt. 1. *WHether any Children of confederate Parents be under their Parents Covenant and members with them.*

Anſw. Some Children of confederate Parents are by meanes of their Parents Covenanting, in Covenant alſo, and ſo Members of the Church by divine Inſtitution. For,

Arg. 1. They that are in that Covenant for ſubſtance which was made with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 7. they are in Covenant, and Members of the Church, by divine Inſtitution, becauſe that Covenant doth inferre Church-Membership, as being the formall cauſe thereof; For 1. A people that are in that Covenant, are thereby the viſible People or Church of God, *Gen.* 17. 7. compared with *Deut.* 29. 12, 13. by this Covenant the Family of *Abraham*, and ſo afterwards the People of *Iſrael*, was made and eſtabliſhed the viſible Church of God. 2. Many were in that Covenant, which never were in ſaving ſtate of grace; Therefore that was the externall or Church Covenant, which God makes with his viſible Church or People. 3. Circumciſion ſealed that Covenant, which was the diſtinguiſhing mark between thoſe within and thoſe without the Church.

But ſome children are in that Covenant for ſubſtance which was made with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 7. as appears by ſundry Scriptures, which being rightly conſidered, and compared, do inferre the continuance of the ſubſtance of that Covenant, whereby God is a God to his People and their ſeed, under the new Teſtament, *Acts* 2. 39. *Gal.* 3. 14. with *Gen.* 28. 4. *Rom.* 11. 16, 17. the Churches of the *Gentiles* do partake of the root of covenanting *Abraham* and of Olive or Church eſtate thereby: So 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. The word [Holy] as applied to any ſort of perſons, and oppoſed to *Gentile*-uncleanneſſe is not in Scripture uſed for leſſe then a Fæderall, or covenant-holineſſe, but is often uſed in that ſenſe, as *Ezr.* 9. 2. *Deut.* 7. 6. and 14. 2. 21. and 26. 19. and 28. 9. *Dan.* 8. 24. and 12. 7. *Rom.* 11. 16. and where a covenant or fæderal eſtate is aſſerted of children, what doth it but refer us to that Ancient and never revoked covenant, common

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to all Nations, whereof *Abraham* was the Pattern-Father, *Gen.* 17. 5, 7. And if *Gentile* Proselytes of old, they and their children shared in that covenant, surely *Gentile* believers now are not behind them in the like priviledge; For the *Gentile* confederate believer is also a child of *Abraham*, *Gal.* 3. 7, 29. *Rom.* 4. 11, 16.

Therefore he hath that covenant of which *Abraham* was a pattern subject, made with him, *viz.* That God will be his God, and the God of his seed, *Luk.* 19. 9.

Arg. 2. Such children as are by Christ, affirmed to have a place and portion in the Kingdome of Heaven, they have a place and portion in the visible Church, and so consequently are members thereof. But so it is with some children, *Math.* 19. 14. *Mark* 10. 14. *Luk* 18. 16. The Proposition is evident, for the Kingdome of heaven or of God is sundry times used to expresse the visible Church, or Church estate, *Math.* 25. 1. and 21. 43. and 8. 12. And if the Disciples might or should have known that those children were to be admitted to Christ upon that ground, then the Kingdome-Interest of such children was a visible or knowable and apparent thing.

If any should expound it of the Kingdome of Glory, yet that would inferre the same thing: For neither may the Church exclude those from her fellowship, who by Christ his testimony are visible heirs of Glory, nor are any in ordinary course heirs of the Kingdome of Glory, that are not of Gods visible Church, and Kingdome of Grace here. And what is there spoken by Christ himself, as a standing truth, and that under the term of the Kingdome of Heaven (a term in speciall manner ap-

plied unto Gospel-Administration) cannot be doubted to continue in force in the Christian Church of the new Testament.

Arg. 3. If no children be members of the visible Church, then was not the Lord Jesus (when a child) a member of the visible Church, but none (we presume) will venture to say so of Christ.

Arg. 4. If it were not so, no children might be Baptized: For Baptisme being a Church Ordinance, and a seal of being incorporated into the Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. and succeeding circumcision, which was proper to the Church, none can be subjects immediately capable thereof, but Church-Members; Nor doth the Power of Officers, as such, extend further then to the Churches; as they cannot judge, so they may not Baptize them that are without, or non-members.

Arg. 5. They that are some of the Disciples intended in *Mat.* 28. 19. are Church-members. For as the term [Disciples] is ordinarily used for Church-Members, *Act.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 5. and 9. 26. and 14. 22, 23, 27, 28. and 18. 27. and *Vers.* 22. with *Chap.* 21. 16. and 20. 7. So this sense thereof best suits that place in *Matthew* 28. 19. because the Disciples there are the immediate subjects of Baptisme, and so of being called by God his name, the wonted Title of Church-Members, and because they are such as are subjected to Christs School, to Christs Doctrine and Discipline, and to the authoritative teaching of his Ministers, and observation of all things that shall be taught by them, *ver.* 20.

But some children are some of the Disciples intended in *Mat.* 28. 19. For 1. some children were some of those whom the Apostles in accomplishing that commission,

mission, did Disciple, *Acts* 15.20. Those whom the false Teachers would have reduced, under the yoke of circumcision, they were some of those whom the Apostles accounted Disciples, or whom the Apostles had Discipled: But some children were some of tho'e, whom the false Teachers would have reduced under the yoke of circumcision, for they would have had both *Gentile* Parents and children circumcised, after the manner of *Moses*. *v.*1,5. with *Exod.* 12.48,49. & *Acts* 21.21. And that the Apostles took in children with Parents when they were conversant in the work of Discipling, further appears from *Acts* 2.39. & 16. 15,31,33. 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. 2. Some children are under the promised teaching of God, *Isa.* 54. 13. And the Word there used is rendred Disciples, *Isa* 8.16. 3. Some children do visibly belong to Christ, *Mark.* 10.14. *Josh.* 22.24,25. Therefore are Disciples. Compare *Mat.* 10.42, with *Mark* 9.41. 4. When Christ saith, Disciple all Nations; he bids gather the *Gentiles* into like covenant and Church-estate (for the substance thereof) which had been the portion of the *Jews*. Therefore he bids Disciple some children.

*Arg.*6. They that are subjects of the Lords visible Spiritual Kingdom, servants and children of the Lords Family, they are Members of the Church, which is called the Lords Kingdom, and House and Family in the Scripture: But so are some children, *Ezek.* 37.25,26,27. It is *Davids*, *i. e.* Christs Spiritual-Gospel-Kingdom, that he there speaks of; and that in reference unto visible Sanctuary or Church-estate. That some children are the Lords Servants, see, *Lev.* 25. 39,41,42. And that, not by common right of Creation onely, or designment unto some particular service; but of special Redemption

and

and conſervation, there ſpoken of. And ſurely both childrens capacity ſo to be, and the Lords Grace and Favour ſo to accept them, was not greater then, than now: That they are children, ſons and daughters of God, ſee *Rom.* 9. 4, 26. *Gen.* 6.2. *Ezek.* 16.20,21. & 23.37. And how were theſe children the Lords children properly and meerly upon the account of internal and ſpiritual regeneration? For that was not found in many of the children ſpoken of in the places mentioned, nor yet only by Creation, for ſo others were Gods children as well as the children of the *Jews*, and ſo the daughters of men were his daughters as well as the other were his ſons, *Gen.* 6.2. Therefore they are ſaid to be Gods children, becauſe of their Covenant, and Church relation unto him; which was common to all the children of the Church, and to none other, and ſo, *Ezek.* 16.8. ſhews, being compared with *verſe* 20,21.

*Arg.*7. If no children be members of the viſible Church, then we have no well-grounded hope according to ordinary courſe of diſpenſation, of the ſalvation of any dying Infants: And the reaſon is, becauſe ſalvation pertains to the Church, *Iſa.* 45. 17. *Eph.* 2. 12. & 5.23,26. *Joh.* 4.22. *Act.* 2.27. *Luke* 19. 9. Thoſe that are without the viſible Kingdom of God, are vifibly in the Kingdom of Satan; for he is the God of the world, 2 *Cor.* 4.4. And to him are men delivered, when they are caſt out of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 5.5. 1 *Tim.* 1.20. So if children live and die out of the viſible Church, they live and die out of Gods viſible Kingdom, and viſibly in the Kingdom of Satan: And then what viſible ground of hope (according to ordinary courſe) of their ſalvation? But to account the eſtate of all that die children, ſo hopeleſſe and forlorn, is contrary to the tender and rich mercy

cy of the Lord, and to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, and to Godly Parents moſt uncomfortable.

*Arg.*8. If ſome children were Members of the Church of God in the old Teſtament, then ſome children are Members of the Church of God in the daies of the new Teſtament: But ſome children were Members of the Church in the time of the old Teſtament; which though a Truth, that we know not how any can deny, yet we may briefly evince and confirm thus; That children then were in Covenant, is expreſly witneſſed, *Gen.*17.7. *Deut.*29. 11,12,15. And that they were in ſuch a Covenant, or ſo in Covenant, as to be Members of the Church that then was, appears, becauſe 1. They were in the ſame Covenant that their Parents or elder perſons were in, and whereby they were conſtituted Members of the Church, *Gen.*17.7. *Deut.*29.10,11,12,14,15. & 27.9. & 26.18. *Jer.*23.11. *Acts* 7.38. 2. They were ſubjects of a Church-Ordinance, never regularly applied to any out of the Church, *viz.* Circumciſion, *Rom.* 3.1,2. They were *Iſraelites*, (*i. e.* In other words, Members of the Church of *Iſrael*) to whom pertained Church priviledges, *Rom* 9.4. They were children of the Kingdom, and ſuch as were capable of being caſt out of Church eſtate, therefore in it, *Mat.*8.12. *Rom.*11.20. *Jer.*7.15. 2 *King.* 17. 20. 5. They were viſibly the Lords people by Covenant, even as the reſt of the people were the Lords people, *Ezek.* 16. 8, 20, 21. 6. They were children of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, as oppoſed to dogs, *i. e.* Perſons out of the Church, *Mat.*15. 24,26. In a word, as oft as they are ſaid or implied to be a part of the holy ſeed, of the holy people, of the Lords people, of *Iſrael*, of the Circumciſion, of thoſe whom God redeemed out of the Land of *Egypt*, to make them

his

his peculiar treasure, of the inheritance and congregati- of the Lord, *&c.* So often are they shewed to be Members of the Church.

But all the Question will be about the consequence of the Proposition, and that may be cleared thus.

1. If the Church of the old Testament and the Church of the Gentiles under the new Testament, be for kind essentially the same, then if children were Members of that Church, they are also Members of these: For if they be the same essentially, and the same for kind, then they have the same Covenant or general Form: Therefore that Covenant which takes in the seed or children, *Gen.*17.7. Therefore the seed or children are in and of the one Church as well as the other. But that the Church State then and now, was and is essentially the same, is evident, because it is the same Kingdom of God, and not another; which is taken from them, and given to us, *Mat.*21.43. & 8.11, 12. One and the same sheepfold for kind, under one and the same shepheard, in which were the *Jews* first, and the *Gentiles* afterwards, *John* 10.16. The *Gentiles* are fellow heirs with the *Jews* of the same body, and partakers of the same promise, *Eph.*3 6. We are in the same root and Olive, from which some of them were broken off, in which the Godly *Jews* not broken off, did still continue, and into which the rest shall be grafted in again in time, *Rom.*11.17,18,24. The conversion of the *Gentiles* is expressed in such a manner, as to be by coming in to the *Jews*, and joyning with them, as *Japhet* must dwell in the Tents of *Shem*, *Gen.*9.27. And not that *Shems* Tents must be destroyed, and other kind of Tents built for *Japhet* to inhabit: All which do shew that the Church then and now, is not essentially

(though

(though ſundry waies accidentally) differing, but the ſame.

2. Again, If the conſequence be not good, then it will follow that ſuch *Jews* as were brought in by the Goſpel into Church-eſtate, were great loſers by embracing the Goſpel; and the children loſers by their Parents Faith, inaſmuch as though in the former ſtate, the children were Members with the Parents, yet now in the Goſpel-eſtate, the children by this aſſertion are all left out. Yea, then the children of thoſe *Jews*, *Acts* 2. Which before the Sermon, when their Parents wanted Faith, were in the covenant and Church-ſtate with their Parents, are now after the Sermon, when their Parents are become believers, caſt out or fallen out of the Church. A ſtrange and harſh Doctrine, that the Faith of the Parents ſhould ſet the children further off from God, and from his Church and covenant, than they were before.

3. Then alſo when the *Jews* ſhall be converted in the latter daies of the new Teſtament, the Parents muſt be Members of the Church, but not the children, and ſo they ſhall be in a worſe condition than formerly, as not having their children in the Church with them, as formerly it was. But beſides the harſhneſſe of ſuch a concluſion, ſee the contrary, in *Jer.* 30.20. *Iſa.* 61.9. & 59.21. & 65.23. *Ezek.* 37.25,26.

4. Although it be true that the Lord hath made difference between the Adminiſtration of his covenant and Grace to his people in theſe daies, from that which was in former times, yet as theſe differences are not in the eſſence of the Church-eſtate, but in accidentals and in degree, ſo where any alteration is made, it is ſtill for our advantage and greater benefit; and therefore our cove-

nant is called a better covenant, and eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes, *Heb.* 7.22. & 8.6. And from this it is that the burden of ceremonies which lay on them, is now taken off; the darkneſſe of Types and Shadows is now removed, and liberty is now given to worſhip the Father every where; whereas they were for many things tied only to *Jeruſalem*, and every congregation of Saints is now a Church entire within it ſelf, whereas then no ſingle congregation had ſuch Church-power and entireneſſe of Jurisdiction; but all their congregations had dependance on *Jeruſalem*, and all made up but one National Church. In theſe things and ſome others that might be named, there is alteration made, but ſtill it is an alteration for the better and for our advantage. But now for the Particular in Queſtion, If children were then Members of the Church, and now be not, here is an alteration made for the worſer, and not for the better, not for our advantage but for our loſſe (for ſo it is, to have all our children put out of covenant and Church, and from all the priviledges thereof, *Joſh.* 22.24,25. *Eph.*2.12. *Pſal.*87.3. *Mat.*15.26.) And therefore ſuch a change may not be admitted. For Chriſt by his coming did not worſen the condition (not of the whole Church, but not) of any one perſon upon Earth, nor yet of any age or condition or ſort of perſons, *Luke* 2.10. And ſurely the child in minority (as the Church of old was, *Gal.*4.1,2.) hath not a greater or larger place in the houſe, nor is in better condition in reſpect of priviledges, than the heir that is full of age. And who can think that a place in Gods Houſe which is promiſed as ſo great a Benefit, in *Iſa.* 56.5,7. And accounted ſuch a Glory, Advantage, *&c. Rom.*3.1,2. & 9.4. Should be no more but a part of that bondage and tutorage which

which belongs to children under age? Hence also add a fifth Argument to prove the consequence above mentioned.

5. If children were once Church-members and do not continue to be Church-members still, then their Membership must have been repealed by the Lord, who alone could make such an alteration: And if any should affirm that the Lord hath done it, it lieth upon them to prove it; and to shew when or where such an alteration was made, or such a repeal may be found. But in the mean time, though it be lesse needful to prove the negative, when-as the affirmative (in such a case as this) cannot be shewed, yet let these considerations amongst others that might be named for that purpose be duly weighed.

1. If the Lord had made such an alteration, (that now under the new Testament no children should be Members of the Church) then in all likelihood Christ or his Apostles would have made mention of it: Witnesse their Faithfulnesse: And how else should we know that the Lord had appointed any such alteration? but now Christ and his Apostles in stead of mentioning any such thing, do confirm the contrary, *Mark* 10.13,14,16. *Acts* 2,39. 1 *Cor.*7.14. And hence the Apostles writing Epistles to Churches, do sometimes expresly and directly apply their speeches unto children, *Eph.6.* 1. *Col.* 3.20. Which seems to imply that they accounted children to be parts and members of the Churches unto whom they sent those Epistles.

2. If the Apostles had taught any such alteration, surely the *Jews* who raised Objections and controversies about matters of far lesser moment, and who did so stumble at taking away the particular Rite of circumcision (for though they had Member-ship and Baptism

allowed to their children, yet that would not satisfie them, without the Rite of circumcision also, *Acts* 16.3. & 15.1. & 21.21.) And considering also how they had been from age to age wonted to this covenant and Church-estate of their children; Surely we say, they would have made a remarkable stand at this, if the Apostles had taught or practised this discovenanting or unmembring of all their children, and the Apostles would have needed both by preaching and writing to have bestowed much pains to have quieted them in this point: But of any such thing there is a deep and total silence in all the new Testament.

Quest.2. *Whether all children of whatever years or conditions be so, as, 1. Absent children never brought to the Church. 2. Born before their Parents Covenanting. 3. Incorrigible of seven, ten, or twelve years old. 4. Such as desire not to be admitted with their Parents, of such an age.*

Ans. Onely such children as are in their minority, covenant with their Parents; therefore not all children of whatsoever years and conditions. We do not hereby exclude such as being defective in their intellectuals, are as children in respect of their incapacity. That adult children are to covenant in their own persons, see *Ans.* to *Quest.* 6th. 2. Children in their minority, though absent, covenant in their Parents, and are Members with them, *Deut.*29.14,15. 3. Children born before their Parents covenanting, yet if in their minority when their Parents enter into covenant, do covenant with them and are Church-members, *Gen.*17.25. The whole houshold of *Lydia*, the Jailor and others were baptized, therefore some children in minority which were born before, except we shall deny so much as one child in minority

nority then alive in all those houses. 4. There is no sufficient reason (at least ordinarily) to conclude a child of seven, ten, or twelve years old to be incorrigible, because a child at the ages mentioned is *infans in foro Ecclesiæ, i. e.* He hath no voice nor is capable of being heard in a Church way, therefore not incorrigible as to the Church. Their obstinacy at the years mentioned is not capital: By Gods Law, *Dent.* 21.18. There is still place for hope, *Prov.* 19.18. & 22.15. 5. Their desiring or not desiring in their own persons during the ages forementioned, is not to be attended as the ground of proceeding in this case, because the ground thereof is the covenant founded upon Divine Institution, and in-depending upon such childrens desires.

Quest. 3. *Till what age shall they enter into Covenant with their Parents, whether sixteen, twenty one, or sixty?*

Ans. As long as in respect of age or capacity they cannot according to ordinary account, be supposed able to act in a matter of this nature for themselves, so long they shall enter in by means of their Parents covenant, because whilst they are children and in their minority, they are not otherwise capable of covenanting: When adult, they are to covenant in their own persons. If a precise and certain age may here be prescribed, surely it is safe to go, at least so far, as may answer the example, *Gen.* 17.25. Where *Ishmael* is admitted to the Seal by his Fathers covenant at thirteen years of age. Howbeit, the bounding of adult and in-adult age, depending upon the judgment of prudence, much is to be left unto the discretion of Officers and Churches in this case.

Quest. 4. *What Discipline a child is subject to, from seven to sixteen years old?*

Ans.

Anſ 1. Church Diſcipline is taken either more largely for the act of a Church-member diſpenſed to a Church-member as ſuch, by way of Spiritual watch, rebuke, *&c. Luke* 17. 3, 4. *Mat.* 18. 15. Or more ſtrictly, for the act of the whole Church, diſpenſed by a Member thereof; as in caſe of publick rebuke, admonition, excommunication, *Mat.* 18. 17. 2 *Cor.* 2. 3. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. In the firſt ſenſe, children in their minority, are ſubject to Church Diſcipline immediately, but not in the ſecond.

2. It is the Duty of the Elders and Church to call upon Parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to ſee as much as in them lieth, that it be effectually done, *Eph.* 6. 4. Officers and Churches reſpectively ſucceed Apoſtles in matters of ordinary practiſe.

3. Beſides their ſubjection to Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, they are alſo ſubject to civil Diſcipline reſpectively according to their capacity, whether Domeſticall, Scholaſticall, or Magiſtraticall.

Queſt. 5. *Whether a Father may twice Covenant for his Children in Minority in ſeveral Churches?*

Anſ. 1. When a Parent is called to remove from one Church to another, he is alſo called to enter into covenant in that Church to which he removes. *Paul* was firſt baptized and in communion at *Damaſcus*, *Act.* 9. 29. Afterwards removed unto *Jeruſalem*, and joyned to the Church there, *v.* 26. This, the very nature of order calleth for, becauſe otherwiſe he can neither do all the duties, nor enjoy all the priviledges of a Member, in the one Church or in the other; not in the former, becauſe now he dwelleth not with them; nor in the other, becauſe though dwelling amongſt them, he joyneth not

not with them in covenant.

2. When the Parent thus removing, entreth into covenant, his children then in minority covenant in him: The child and the power of Government over the child, must go together, *Prov.*29.15.

3. Hence it is the duty of Churches when they give Letters dimissory unto Parents, to insert the dismission of the children then in minority with them.

4. Adult children yet under the power of the Parents and removing with them, are to give their personal consent unto this translation of their Membership, and so to be orderly dismissed and received with their Parents, otherwise they remain Members of the Church of which they were before.

Quest.6. *Whether the end of a Deputy Covenant, be not to supply personall incapacity, or whether Children ripe for personall Covenanting in regard of age, should Covenant by a Deputy, as others that are unable thereunto?*

Ans. 1. Children in their minority, whose immediate Parents are in Church-Covenant, do covenant in their Parents; see the proof hereof in answer to Question 1.

2. Children adult ought to covenant in their own Persons. To covenant in our own persons according to the sense of this Question, is nothing else but an orderly and Church profession of our Faith, or a personall publick and solemn avouching of God, in an Ecclesiasticall way, to be our God, according to the covenant of his Grace, the great duty of the people of God throughout all generations, both in the times of the Law and Gospel: Pregnant and Illustrious examples whereof we have, in the time of *Moses*, *Deut.*26.17,18,19. & 29.

10,

10, 11, &c. And of *Joshua*, *Josh* 24. 18, 27. Of *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 12. Of *Josiah*, 2 *Chron.* 34.31,32. So *Jer.* 50 5. A considerable part of which Propheſie (for it extends it ſelf alſo to the ages after Chriſt) we have accompliſhed *Nehem* 9. *ult.* & 10.28, 29. The Prieſts and Levites and many others there named, and their wives, and their ſons, and their daughters, every one that had knowledge, and that had underſtanding, did cleave unto their Brethren, their Nobles, and entred into a covenant and an Oath, to walk in Gods Law; ſo of the times under the Law.

Concerning the times under the Goſpel, in *Iſa.*62.5. & 41.3,4,5. We read of the ſeed and off-ſpring of *Jacob* and *Iſrael*, that when they ſhould be ſprung and grown up (*h. e.* become adults) they ſhould both by word and writing, by ſaying and ſubſcribing with their hands, engage themſelves unto the Lord. It is a part of inſtituted Goſpel-Worſhip. The ſame reaſon which called the Fathers to confeſſion before, calleth the ſon alſo when adult. It went for good reaſon among the *Jews*; He is of age, he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf, *Joh.* 9. 21. What more meet than that the confeſſion of our Faith ſhould be made with our own mouths when we are able? God avoucheth them in the ſame day when they avouch him. It is a ſpecial engagement of the adult perſon, to perform his covenant, *Pſal.* 119. 106. I have ſworn and will perform.

Laſtly, It is a duty (compared with others) eſpecially commended in the Scriptures, from the ſubject thereof, *viz.* A Believer, *Rom.* 10. 10. Every believer is a confeſſor. From the matter, the greateſt Truth, *i. e.* The Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus, *Heb.* 3. 1. The Apoſtle of our confeſſion. From the manner (others not being

excluded

excluded, as we are called thereunto, 1 *Pet.*3.15.) In a Church way, *Mat.*16.16,19. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.*9.13. in a ſpecial manner commends the ſubjection of the obedience of the Church aſtipulation of the *Corinthians:* From its excellency, a good Profeſſion, 1 *Tim.* 6.12. A good confeſſion, *v.*13. Its giving glory unto God, 2 *Cor.*9.13. Its victorious exemplarineſſe in reſpect of men, *Rev.* 12.11. The bleſſing upon the ſincere performance thereof, *Heb.*11.13,16. *Mat.*10.32. With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſſe, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.

Queſt.7. *Whether as large Qualifications be not required of a Members child to the participation of the Lords Supper, and the priviledges of votes and cenſures, as were requirable of his Parents at their firſt entrance?*

Anſ. The holding forth of Faith and Repentance with an ability to examine themſelves, by way of confeſſi n, to the judgment of Charity, were all requirable in the Parent for admiſſion into the Church to full communion, and the ſame is requiſite for the regular admiſſion of the Parents child being grown adult, unto his full communion with the Church. See the platform of Church Diſcipline, *cap.* 12.§.7.

For the clearing of this Propoſition two things are to be proved. 1. That they are to have Faith and Repentance. 2. That this Faith and Repentance muſt appear to others.

Firſt, They are to have Faith & Repentance. 1. Becauſe Examination is the duty, and Faith and Repentance are the matter of their Examination, without both the being and exerciſe of which, they cannot come worthily to the Lords Supper, which is the end of their examination. 2. From the end of the Lords Supper, which is inſtituted, not for regeneration, but for nouriſhment

and confirmation. 'Tis a Supper and a Seal.

That their Faith and Repentance ought to appear to others, is manifeſt thus; The Officers ought to be wiſe and faithful ſtewards, now to ſuch it belongs not only to diſpenſe a portion in reaſon, but to ſee alſo that thoſe to whom it is diſpenſed, are meet to receive their portion, *Luke* 12.42. 1 *Cor*.4.2. The Lords Supper cannot regularly be adminiſtred to any receiver, concerning whom perſonally, according to Truth, in the judgment of charity, the Miniſter cannot ſay, Take and eat, this is the body of the Lord Jeſus which was given for you: But this the Miniſter cannot ſay with good Conſcience to any one upon his meer having of Faith and Repentance without a viſible holding forth of the ſame to others in their own perſons, becauſe both the exerciſe of reaſon and the exerciſe of Grace are requiſite to the taking and eating here required. As this proves the aſſertion concerning the Officers, ſo 1 *Cor*.10.15,16,17. proveth the ſame concerning the whole body, becauſe in a regular celebration of the Lords Supper, the whole Church doth judge all the partakers thereof to have ſpiritual communion with Chriſt crucified, and one with another as one body in him. It is the duty of the Church and Officers reſpectively (as the keepers of the holy things) ſo to diſcern between the holy and prophane, the clean and the unclean, as that the Sacrament may onely be adminiſtred unto worthy receivers, *Ezek*. 44.7,8,23. But this cannot be, except the premiſed eſſentiall requiſites be made appear to them in judgment of Charity. Concerning the power of voting, it is not rational that they ſhould exerciſe a Church-power as to the adminiſtration of Church-Ordinances, which voting implies, who themſelves are unfit for all Ordinances. They who are

thus

thus unfit will abuſe the Ordinances themſelves, and admit and retain unworthy Officers and Members, and diſcourage the worthy, and therefore power in the hands of ſuch is not for edification, but for deſtruction, contrary to the mind of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 10.8.

Queſt.8. *Whether by Covenant ſeed, is meant the ſeed of immediate Parents onely, or of remote alſo?*

Anſ. The Goſpel by Covenant ſeed, intends only the ſeed of immediate Parents in Church Covenant, as appears from 1 *Cor.*7.14. The Parents there ſpoken of are immediate Parents, their Progenitors were Heathens. The Goſpel extends not the external Covenant beyond the immediate Parents: If neither of the immediate Parents be in Covenant, their children are unclean; ſee the Text. The next Parent may bring in his ſeed, though his Progenitors be unbelievers; and the next Parents may cut off their ſeed, though the progenitors be believers; witneſſe the inſtances of *Iſhmael* and *Eſau*, *Jer.* 9. 25, 26. *Ezek.* 32.29. *Pſal.*83.6. *Mal.*1.4. *Gen.*21.10. Otherwiſe there can no generation be given, where the Covenant Intereſt of poſterity can expedientely be bounded: *Depinge ubi ſiſtam*, Shew us where we ſhall make our ſtand. The contrary expoſeth the Churches to inevitable and intollerable impurities.

Queſt.9. *Whether adopted Children and bond ſervants be Covenant-ſeed?*

Anſ. Adopted children and Infant-ſervants, regularly and abſolutely ſubjected to the Government and diſpoſe of ſuch heads of Families as are in Church-covenant, though they cannot be ſaid to be their natural ſeed, yet in regard the Scriptures (according to the judgment of many Godly Learned) extend to them the

ſame Covenant priviledges with their natural ſeed, we judge not any Churches who are like-minded with them, for their practiſe herein: All which notwithſtanding, yet we deſire at preſent to leave this Queſtion without all prejudice on our parts to after free diſquiſition.

Queſt. 10. *Whether the child admitted by his Fathers Covenant, be alſo a Deputy for his ſeed, without or before perſonal Covenanting, or without & before like perſonal qualifications in kind, as his Father was to enjoy when he became a Deputy?*

Anſ. The meaning of this Queſtion in other terms we conceive to be this; whether the child of a perſon joyned in Church-Covenant by means of his or her immediate Parents Covenant, though ſuch a Parent be not admitted to, nor qualified for full communion, nor have covenanted in their own perſon, whether we ſay, the child of ſuch a perſon is to be baptized: Whereunto we anſwer, in theſe following propoſitions.

Propoſ. 1. Infants either of whoſe immediate Parents are in Church-Covenant, do confæderate with their Parents, and are therefore Church-members with them. See Anſ. to Queſt. 1.

Propoſ. 2. It is the duty of thoſe Infants when grown up to years of diſcretion, though not yet fit for the Lords Supper, to own the Covenant they made with their Parents, by entring thereinto in their own perſons, and it is the duty of the Church to call upon them for the performance thereof; as appeareth by Scripture examples of perſons both called to, and entring into Covenant, many of whom could not be looked upon as perſonally Gracious, and therefore not fit for all Ordi-

nances

nances and full communion, *Deut.*29.12,14. 2 *Chron.*15. 12. 2 *Chron.* 34.31,32. Where it is mentioned as the performance of a duty whereto they ſtand obliged by the Covenant made in their Infancy.

*Propoſ.*3. Being accordingly called thereunto, if after Church-admonition and other due means with patience uſed, they ſhall refuſe the performance of this great duty, or in caſe they ſhall (notwithſtanding like means applied) any otherwiſe continue ſcandalous, it is the part of the Church to proceed with them to the cenſure of excommunication, becauſe the Facts mentioned deſerve excommunication, 2 *Chron.* 15.13. *Mat.* 18.17. 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6,14. And the perſons are Church-members, being confederate with their Parents; and the Church as the matter requireth, adminiſtreth Diſcipline to the Members thereof, without reſpect of perſons, according to their capacity, 1 *Cor.*5.12. 1 *Tim.* 5. 21. Add hereunto the inſtance of thoſe who are ſeparated from the Congregation, for their non-obſervance of that Covenant, *Ezr.*10. 3,7,8. Together with the examples of *Cain*, *Iſhmael*, and *Eſau*, not a little contributing to the truth of this aſſertion, by way of proportion.

See the platform of Diſcipline, *cap.* 12.§. 7.

*Propoſ.*4. In caſe they underſtand the grounds of Religion, are not ſcandalous, and ſolemnly own the Covenant in their own perſons, wherein they give up both themſelves and their children unto the Lord, and deſire Baptiſm for them, we (with due reverence to any Godly Learned that may diſſent) ſee not ſufficient cauſe to deny Baptiſm unto their children, theſe reaſons for the affirmative being propoſed to conſideration.

1. Church-Members without offence and not baptized,

zed, are to be baptized.

The children in Queſtion are Church-Members without offence and not baptized.

Therefore the children in Queſtion are to be baptized.

2. Children in the covenant of *Abraham*, as to the ſubſtance thereof, *i. e.* To whom the promiſe made to *Abraham*, as to the ſubſtance thereof doth belong, are to be baptized.

The children in Queſtion are children in the covenant of *Abraham*, as to the ſubſtance thereof.

Therefore the children in Queſtion are to be baptized.

3. Children in the ſame eſtate with thoſe children under the Law, unto whom the ſeal of the righteouſneſſe of Faith, becauſe in that eſtate was by Inſtitution Divine to be applied, the Precept for ſo doing not repealed, and the reaſon for ſo doing ſtill remaining are to be baptized.

But the children in Queſtion are children in the ſame eſtate (*viz.* regularly in Church-covenant) with thoſe children under the Law, unto whom the ſeal of the righteouſneſſe of Faith, becauſe in that eſtate was by Inſtitution Divine to be applied, the Precept for ſo doing not repealed, and the reaſon for ſo doing ſtill remaining.

Therefore the children in Queſtion are to be baptized.

4. Either the children in queſtion are to be baptized, or the Goſpel diſpenſation forbids the application of the ſeal unto children regularly in Church-covenant, unto whom the Moſaical diſpenſation commanded it to be applied.

But

But the Gospel dispensation forbids not the application of the seal unto children regularly in Church-covenant, unto whom the Mosaical dispensation commanded it to be applied.

Therefore the children in question are to be baptized.

The contrary opinion infers that the Gospel bereaveth the children mentioned (at least in a considerable degree) of their glory, advantage, mercy, blessing, and that in this respect it casts reproach, yea brings disadvantage, a judgment, a curse upon them. *Josh* 5.9. *Rom.*3.1,2. & 9.4,5. This seems to be a lesse Evangelicall Tenent, the nature of the Gospel being to enlarge and better, not to contract and diminish the external dispensation of Grace.

5. Children unto whom the Gospel testifieth both the promise and baptisme by vertue of that promise, to belong, ought to be baptized.

The children in question are children unto whom the Gospel testifieth both the promise and baptism by vertue of that promise, to belong, *Acts* 2.39.

Therefore the children in Question ought to be baptized.

Obj. The Parent though a Church-member, owning the Covenant in his own person, and qualified according to the premises, is not admitted to full communion, therefore the child ought not to be baptized.

Ans. The Church-act onely, and not any other act (much lesse defect) of the Parent is by Divine Institution, accounted to the child. The membership of the child is a distinct membership, from the membership of

of the Parent. In case the Parents membership ceaseth by death or censure, the membership of the child remaineth still. The membership of the child is the same in kind with, and not inferiour to the membership of the Parent. Membership is a Relation, and therefore admits not of *magis* and *minus*, more or lesse: Members are better or worse, and communion is more or lesse; but membership admits not of degrees. *Benjamin* an Infant, but of an hour old, is as truly a son as *Reuben*, a man of twenty two years of age. The child is baptized by vertue of his own membership, and not by vertue of his Parents membership. The Parents death is not with us an obstacle of the Childs Baptism.

Propos.5. The same may be said concerning the children of such persons in question, who being dead or necessarily absent, either did or do give the Churches cause in judgment of charity, to look at them as thus qualified, and such, as had they been called thereunto would so acted: For in Charity that is here done interpretatively, which is mentioned in the fourth Proposition expresly.

Propos.6. Though the persons forementioned own the Covenant according to the premises, yet before they are admitted to full communion (*i.e.* To the Lords Supper and voting) they must so hold forth their Faith and Repentance, unto the judgment of Charity by way of confession in the congregation, as it may appear unto the Church, that they are able to examine themselves and to discern the Lords body. See the proof hereof in *Ans.* to *Quest.*7th.

Quest.11. *Whether children begotten by an excommunicate person are to be baptized, he so remaining?*

Ans.

Anſ. We cannot for the preſent anſwer the following Arguments for the Negative. 1. Perſons excommunicate are not members, and the promiſe made to the ſeed, belongs (under the Goſpel) onely to the ſeed of immediate Parents in Covenant. 2. Excommunicate Parents are to be looked at in Church account as Heathens and Publicans, now the Church ought not to baptize the children of thoſe which ſhe is to account as Heathens & Publicans, becauſe their children are unclean, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. 3. To baptize the children of the excommunicate, is to have Church-communion with the excommunicate: But thoſe that we are forbidden to have civil communion with, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. We are much more forbidden to have Church Communion with.

Queſt. 12. *Whether a Child born of a juſtly cenſurable perſon, yet not actually excommunicate, be to be baptized?*

Anſ. We anſwer affirmatively. 1. Becauſe the child is a Church-member by vertue of his covenanting with his Parents. 2. Becauſe the foundation of the covenant membership of the child, is Divine Inſtitution, which imputes the Covenant Act only, and not any other Act of the Parents to the child.

Queſt. 13. *Whether a Members Childs unfitneſs for ſeals, diſableth not his ſeed for Membership or Baptiſm?*

Anſ. This queſtion agreeing in ſcope with *Queſt.* 10. We refer thither for Anſwer thereunto.

Queſt. 14. *Whether a Members Child be cenſurable for any thing but ſcandalous actions, and not alſo for ignorance and inexperience?*

Anſ. A Members child (like as it is with all other

members) is censurable only for scandalous sins, *Mat.* 18.15,18. 1 *Cor.*5.11. Consequently for ignorance and inexperience when scandalous, for all ignorance and inexperience though blameable is not scandalous, *Rom.* 14.1. *Heb* 5.12. *Luke* 9.55.

Quest.15. *Whether a Members Child must only examine himself, and may not be examined by others, of his fitnesse for seals?*

Ans. It is a duty of a Members child to examine himself, and yet he is also subject to the examination of others.

1. Because the Elders are to give an account, which necessarily presupposeth that God hath given them power in some respects to take an account, *Heb.*13. 17. *Acts* 8. 37.

2. It pertaineth to them to see that the holy things be not defiled, by the accesse of any unclean and unworthy person, *Ezek.* 44. 23. *Mal.* 1. 6, 7, 9. & 2.1.

3. To teach by question and answer in the most profitable way, for the instruction and edification of the younger sort, and is commended occasionally, to the practise of the Churches, *Gal.*6.6.

Quest.16. *Whether only Officers must examine in private or else publike before the Church?*

Ans. Concerning their examination by the Elders in private, the former reasons conclude affirmatively, whereunto may be added occasionally that *James* and the Elders contrive and prepare in private, for the more orderly and quiet transactions of things in publick, *Acts* 21.22,23. 'Tis spiritual wisdom by preparing the stones beforehand, to prevent after noise in the building, 1 *Kin.* 7.6.

Publick

Publick examination we also conceive to be regular; edification or due satisfaction of the Church calling thereunto, yet alwaies orderly, that is, by approbation of the Presbytery, and the immediate proposal of the questions by them, to the examinate, *Rev.*2.2. 1 *Cor.*14.40.

Quest.17. *Whether the same grown Members Child must not be examined of his Charitable experience, before Baptism, as well as before the Lords Supper?*

Ans. We think the Elders do well to take an account of children, concerning the Principles of Religion according to their capacity, before they be baptized. If the children spoken of in the question, be yet in their minority, their right unto Baptism being founded consequently upon the Covenant made in their Parents; this Examination is to be looked at as conducing to the better application, but not to the being of their Baptism. But if they be adult, they are to give an account of their Faith and Repentance, in their own persons, before they be baptized, *Acts* 8.36,37. *Mat*3.6. See *Ans.* to *Quest* 6th.

Quest.18. *Whether baptized Children sent away from the Church for settlement, and not intending return, are continually to be accounted Members?*

Ans. Baptized children though locally removed from the Church unto which they belong, are to be accounted Members, until dismission, death or censure dissolve that Relation, because Christ the Institutor of this Relation, onely by these waies dissolveth the same.

Quest.19. *Whether Historical Faith and a blameless life fit a Members Child for all Ordinances, and*

Priviledges, and he must be examined only about them?

Anſ. Not only hiſtorical Faith, *i. e.* The meer knowledge of the fundamental Doctrine of Faith and a blameleſſe life, but alſo ſuch an holding forth of Faith and Repentance, as unto judgment of Charity ſheweth an ability to examine themſelves and to diſcern the Lords body, is requiſite to fit a Members child for all Ordinances and Priviledges, and his blameleſſe life notwithſtanding, a Members child is to be examined concerning the other qualifications.

That both the having and holding forth of Faith and Repentance, are requiſite to fit for all Ordinances, ſee *Anſ.* to *Queſt.* 7th.

That a meer Hiſtorical Faith and every blameleſſe life is not ſufficient to hold forth theſe qualifications, appears;

1. An Hiſtorical Faith as meerly ſuch, is inſufficient, *Jam.* 2.19.

2. A blameleſſe life is either taken for ſuch a conformity of the external man to the Letter, as exempts from cenſure, *Mat.* 19.20. *Phil.* 3.6. Or for ſuch a conformity of the whole man as in judgment of Charity commends a perſon to the Conſcience of the beholder, as in meaſure ſpiritual, *Phil.* 1.10. & 2.15.

A blameleſſe life in the firſt ſenſe is not ſufficient to qualifie for all Ordinances, but for our fitneſſe thereunto, the Rule calleth for a blameleſſe life in the ſecond ſenſe, *Matth.* 3. 8, 9. *James* 2. 21. Beſides the holding forth of Faith and Repentance according to the Premiſes.

Queſt. 20. *Whether if a Church-Member barely ſay, it repents me, though ſeventy times ſeven times following*

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ing he relapse into the same gross evils, as lying, slander, oppression, &c. *He be to be forgiven, and not censured?*

Ans. Though we alwaies acknowledge that the Holy One of *Israel* is not to be limited by man or Angel, as to the dispensation of his Grace, yet so far as we remember the Scriptures, seventy times seven times, *i.e.* 490 relapses into the same grosse sin, and repentance is an instance not extant there. Without the fruits meet for repentance, we are not called to forgive, *Mat.*3.8. *Luk.*17.3.

Notwithstanding a Brother offends seventy times seven times, that is, many times, a definite number being put for an indefinite, yet whilst God enables him to repent, it is our duty to forgive. 'Tis not the number of offences, but the holding forth of repentance in the offender, that is the measure of our forgivenesse, *Mat.* 18.22. As God for Christs sake forgave us, so ought we to forgive one another, *Ephes.* 4. 32.

To say in words, I repent, and to gainsay it in deeds, is according to Scripture, not to repent, yea, rather to continue in impenitency, *Tit.* 1.16. *Jam.* 2.18,26.

An ingenuous and solemn profession of repentance, nothing appearing to the contrary, is to be accepted as true repentance in the judgment of Charity, *Luk.*17.3. 1 *Cor.*13.7.

Quest.21. *Whether a Member under offence and not censured, or not with the highest Censure, can authoritatively be denied the Lords Supper or other Church priviledges?*

*Ans.*1. None but the Church can Authoritatively deny

Priviledges, and he must be examined only about them?

Anſ. Not only hiſtorical Faith, *i. e.* The meer knowledge of the fundamental Doctrine of Faith and a blameleſſe life, but alſo ſuch an holding forth of Faith and Repentance, as unto judgment of Charity ſheweth an ability to examine themſelves and to diſcern the Lords body, is requiſite to fit a Members child for all Ordinances and Priviledges, and his blameleſſe life notwithſtanding, a Members child is to be examined concerning the other qualifications.

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Quest.21. *Whether a Member under offence and not censured, or not with the highest Censure, can authoritatively be denied the Lords Supper or other Church-priviledges?*

*Ans.*1. None but the Church can Authoritatively deny

deny to the Member his acceſſe unto the Lords Supper, becauſe the power thereof is only delegated to that ſubject, *Mat.* 18. 17.

2. The Church cannot deny unto a Member his acceſſe unto the Lords Supper, untill ſhe hath regularly judged him to be an offender.

3. The cenſure of admonition is the firſt act whereby a Church doth judicially declare a Member to be an offender; therefore till the cenſure of admonition be paſt, a Member cannot Authoritatively be denied communion in the Lords Supper, or other Church-priviledges, becauſe of offence.

4. After the ſentence of Admonition is paſt, the offender now admoniſhed, may be (yea thereby is) Authoritatively denied to come unto the Lords Supper, and to vote in the Church, becauſe he is judicially unclean, *Lev.* 22. 3, 4. & 7. 20, 21. *Mat.* 5. 23, 24. Though he be not yet Cenſured with the Cenſure of Excommunication.

5. All which notwithſtanding, there are caſes wherein a Brother apparently diſcerned to be in a condition rendring him (ſhould he ſo proceed to the Lords Supper) an unworthy Communicant, may and ought regularly to be adviſed to forbear, and it is his duty to hearken thereunto.

6. Yet two things are here carefully to be attended.

1. That Brethren be not many Maſters, taking upon them to adviſe and to admoniſh others to abſtain without cauſe, or before the time, *Jam.* 3. 1.

2. That none forbear to come worthily, which is their duty, becauſe to their private apprehenſion, another is ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed (at leaſt) to come unworthily, which is their ſin.

7. In caſe the Church ſhall ſee cauſe to adviſe a Member to forbear, and he ſhall refuſe to hearken thereunto, his refuſal being alſo a violation of Church Order, addeth contumacy to his offence, and thereby ripens the Offender for Cenſure.

19 4th. 1657.
Boſton. N.E.

ERRATA.

PAg. 5. l. 1. read *Act.* 15. 10. p. 6. l. 23. r. *Act.* 2. 47. p. 14. l. 7. r. 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. l. 26. r. *Act.* 9. 19. p. 18. l. 5. for *reaſon* r. *ſeaſon*. p. 23. l. 30. for *Church-act* r. *Covenant-act*. p. 24. l. 19, 20. r. would *have* ſo. p. 26. l. 20. for *in* r. *is*.